

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

GLOBAL GAG RULE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to President Bush's decision to reinstate the Mexico City restrictions on United States assistance to international family planning organizations abroad. I also urge the Bush administration to stop misleading the American people by stating that American taxpayer dollars are being used to pay for abortions overseas. The truth is that since 1973, under the HELMS amendment, the United States has prohibited foreign recipients of international family planning aid to use taxpayer funds to perform abortions. Despite this fact, however, President Bush's press secretary, in his defense of the global gag rule, has continued to state that American taxpayer dollars are being used to pay for abortion services. This is just downright wrong.

President Bush's decision to reinstate the global gag rule will deny United States family planning assistance to any organization that uses its own, non-United States taxpayer funds to provide abortion services or engage in reproductive choice advocacy. This would be unconstitutional in our own country.

Each year, approximately 600,000 women die from preventable complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Ninety-nine percent of these women are in developing countries. Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death and disability among women aged 15 to 49 in the developing countries. Many of these deaths can be prevented by providing women with the means and the information to responsibly plan their families. United States funding provides family planning services and reproductive health education to families worldwide. So cutting funding for family planning diminishes access to the single most effective means of reducing the need for abortions.

Access to international family planning services is one of the most effective means of reducing the need for abortion and protecting the health of women and babies. Restricting funds to organizations that provide a wide range of safe and effective family planning services can only lead to more, not fewer, abortions. And limiting access to family planning results in high rates of unintended and high-risk pregnancy, unsafe abortions, and maternal deaths.

It is crucial that women across the world have fundamental access to health care. Our support of international family planning helps save lives. It promotes women's and children's health and strengthens families and communities around the world. By denying these vital services, we deny women access to methods of contraception, leading to higher risks of getting and spreading the HIV/AIDS virus. Funding for family planning will help curb the spread of sexually transmitted disease.

I urge the Bush administration to really correct their misstatements about international family planning aid. If not, it is our duty as Members of Congress to stand up and inform the American people that the President's executive order will restrict funds to organizations that provide a wide range of safe and effective family planning services to women in need. Millions of women around the world are begging President Bush to reconsider this decision. I implore the President to consider the deadly ramifications of his decision and really help poor women in need of basic education regarding their health care.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PLATTS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. SCHAKOWSKY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. SAWYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SAWYER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

AID TO INTERNATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING SHOULD CONTINUE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in coalition with my colleagues to express my deep concern and opposition to President Bush's recent declaration to discontinue the aid in family planning and to reinstate the global gag rule. In essence, this global gag rule restricts foreign, nongovernmental organizations that accept international family planning funds from using their own non-U.S. money to provide legal abortion services or to lobby their own governments for changes in the abortion laws. While this gag rule is simply bad policy, its consequences are extremely severe, affecting the health of women and families in some of the poorest and neediest countries under some of the direst of circumstances.

These consequences have not been fully or accurately disclosed to the American people. At its best, this global gag rule will serve to undermine a key priority of United States foreign policy, to promote Democratic values worldwide. At its worst, it will block access to contraceptives, increase the incidents of illegal abortion and lead to higher maternal mortality rates. Instead of presenting these facts to the American people, President Bush provided the press with an attractive sound bite explaining his recent decision: Quote, I am opposed to American taxpayer dollars being used to pay for abortions overseas, end quote.

The statement is grossly inaccurate. As we know, the global gag rule is totally unrelated to the issue of taxpayers' funds being used for abortions. In fact, since 1973, under the Helms amendment, the United States has prohibited the use of taxpayer funds from being used for the performance of abortions by foreign recipients of international family planning aid. That is nearly 30 years.

Before he was elected, George W. Bush said he wanted to change the way America thinks about abortion and he claimed to be a uniter and did a wonderful adroit dance around this issue every time he was asked. Nothing in his campaign suggested that he intended to take this step which, frankly, according to his words, he seems not to understand what he has done.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to not only express my strong opposition to President Bush's efforts to reinstate the global gag rule, but I urge the Bush administration to correct their misstatements about international family planning aid. The American people deserve to know the truth.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

IN OPPOSITION TO IMPOSITION OF THE GLOBAL GAG RULE

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong opposition to President Bush's decision to reinstate the anti-democratic Mexico City restrictions on U.S. assistance to international family planning organizations. Also known as the Global Gag Rule, this provision prohibits nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that receive U.S. family planning assistance from using their own private non-U.S. funds to provide counseling, referrals, or services related to abortion or to engage in any effort to change the laws of their country governing abortion.

This harmful provision will not prevent abortions—desperate women will still find a way to obtain an abortion. But the restrictions will help to make abortions more dangerous and will inhibit access to family planning and reproductive health services to the world's poorest and most powerless women.

International family planning programs provide vital services that improve women's health and mortality, improve child survival